



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES

COPS

Office of the Director
145 N Street NE, Washington, DC 20530

August 28, 2017

Mr. Ajit Pai, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Proceeding Number 15-94

Dear Chairman Pai,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the public comments filed in response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking pertaining to Blue Alerts. We are heartened that so many individuals and organizations took the time to share important thoughts and insights regarding the creation of a dedicated Emergency Alert System (EAS) event code for Blue Alerts.

Having now considered the public comments, we continue to strongly support the proposed “BLU” event code, and see it is a vital tool in our shared responsibility to protect law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. Blue Alerts can provide an immediate warning to thousands or even millions of innocent persons in an area where an extremely violent offender is thought to be. Warnings would also provide instructions to keep innocent persons safe and information on what to do if a suspect is spotted.

Some have suggested that law enforcement agencies could use the existing “Law Enforcement Warning” (LEW) event code to transmit warnings about Blue Alert situations rather than create a dedicated event code for Blue Alerts. We respectfully disagree with this approach. Despite its serious sounding name, the LEW event code is most often used for routine informational purposes such as hazardous road conditions and road closures. Consequently, there is often a perceived lack of urgency associated with the LEW event code.

A review of actual LEW alerts issued during the past three years show that the majority provided basic notification of road closures or traffic disruptions due to non-emergency situations or conditions. The remaining cases tended to involve missing persons or reported police activity in a certain area. There was only one example where an LEW alert was related to a wanted fugitive.

Beyond the practical and immediate benefits of the Emergency Alerts System, a dedicated EAS event code for Blue Alerts would streamline Blue Alert plans across the nation and will help to integrate existing plans into a coordinated national framework. Such a code would also serve as the central and organizing element for Blue Alert plans coast-to-coast and greatly facilitate the work of the National Blue Alert Network. Law enforcement stakeholders from



around the country have cited the absence of a dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code as a key limitation to broader adoption and use of Blue Alert plans

The proposed BLU event code represents the single greatest need of the National Blue Alert Network. We are excited at the prospect of leveraging BLU to expand the reach and effectiveness of Blue Alerts. We thank you and the FCC for your leadership on this issue of national importance and strongly support the creation of a dedicated EAS event code for Blue Alerts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Russell Washington
Acting Director